THE TESTIMONY OF Isaac Pennington

CONCERNING

Liberty of Conscience, and Church-Government.

ALSO

Edward Burrough

HIS

Vision of the Flock.

Needfull to be seriously considered of by You, (called QUAKERS) among whom it is plainly fulfilled, and proved a true *Vision*, and not a *Dream* of his own making.

Teste T. C.

The Lord said, I have surely seen the Affliction of my People, and have heard their Cry, by reason of their Taskmasters, and I am come to deliver.

LONDON, Printed in the Year, 1681.

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OF

Isaac Pennington

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Edward Burrough

HIS

Collection of Epistles.

Needfull to be seriously considered of by You, [illegible] MAKERS;

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[illegible] T. C.

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[illegible] LONDON, [illegible]

Iſaac Pennington's Teſtimony, &c.

'THE great Work of the Miniſters of Chriſt, is to keep the Conſcience open to Chriſt, and to preſerve men from receiving any Truth of Chriſt, as from them, further than the Spirit opens; or to imitate any of their practices further than the Spirit leads or perſwades them. For perſons are exceeding prone to receive things as Truths from thoſe they have an 'high opinion of, and to imitate their practices, and ſo hurt their own 'growth, and endanger their Souls: for if I receive a Truth before the 'Lord make it manifeſt to me, I loſe my Guide, and follow but the coun-'ſel of the fleſh; which is exceeding greedy of receiving Truths, and run-'ning into Religious Practices without the Spirit. Therefore the main 'thing in Religion is to keep the Conſcience pure to the Lord, to receive 'from Him that Light whereby I am to walk; and not take things for 'Truths, becauſe others ſee them to be Truths, but wait until the Spirit 'manifeſt them to me: nor to run into Worſhips or Practices, becauſe o-'thers are led thither, but to wait until the Spirit lead me thither. He 'that makes haſte to be rich (even in Religion) running into Knowledg, 'into Worſhips and Performances, before he feel a true and clear guidance, 'ſhall not be innocent, neither will the Lord hold him guiltleſs when he 'comes to viſit for ſpiritual Adultery and Idolatry. The Apoſtles were 'exceeding tender in this caſe: for though they certainly and infallibly 'knew what was to be believed, yet they were not Lords over Men's 'Faith, but waited, till he who is Lord of the Faith, would open the 'way into Mens Conſciences: They did not take on them to be able to 'turn the Key to let in Truth and Conviction into Men's Spirits; (as 'Men in theſe days have been too apt to undertake) but directed them to 'Him who had the Key, there to wait for the Conviction and Illumina-'tion of their Minds, and ſo to receive in as they found Him give forth to 'them.

'*Let every Man* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *be fully perſwaded in his own mind.* 'Take heed of receiving too ſoon, take heed of running into practices 'too ſoon, and doing what you ſee others do, but wait for your own

'particular guidance, and a full perſwaſion from God what is his Will 'concerning you. Though I know this to be a Truth, yet do not you 'receive it till God make it manifeſt to you; receive Truth from His 'Hand, ſtay till he give it you. Indeed the main matter in Religion, is, 'to keep out the wrong part, the forward part, from running into Du-'ties, catching of Openings, &c. and to feel the Heir born of the immor-'tal Seed, to whom all belongs, and that the other Birth never after-'wards get above Him, but be ſubdued and brought into ſubjection.

'Again, with the Apoſtle, *take heed of doing any thing doubtingly*, be not 'forward nor haſty, wait for the leadings of the Spirit; beſure what thou 'doſt receive or practiſe that it be in Faith, for what ever is not ſo, is Sin, 'being an error from the principle of Life, which is to guide. And ſo the 'Apoſtle warns Believers to take heed of drawing one another on too 'faſt, or judging one another in ſuch things as ſome might have light in, 'and others not; as eating, or not eating: Alſo in matters of Worſhip, 'he that keeps a Day, or obſerves a Sabbath, or not keeps a Day, or not 'obſerves a Sabbath, not to judg or condemn one another. For the *Jews* 'which were truly converted, were hard to be drawn off the obſerving 'their Sabbath, and could hardly bear with the believing *Gentiles*, who 'obſerved not their Sabbath, but eſteemed every Day ſanctified to the 'Lord; and thoſe who eſteemed every Day dedicated to the Lord (ceaſ-'ing from Sin, and reſting to Him under the Goſpel, were not to ſet up 'a new Type, but enter by Faith into the true Reſt, wherein is the ſub-'ſtance of what the other ſignified) could hardly bear with them who 'obſerved a Day. Even in the Apoſtles days Chriſtians were too apt to 'ſtrive after a wrong Unity and Conformity in outward practices, and 'unrighteouſly judge one another in thoſe things. It is not the different 'practice from one another that breaks the Peace and Unity, but the 'judging one another becauſe of them: for he that keeps not a Day, 'may unite in the ſame Spirit, Life, and Love with him that keeps a 'Day, and he who keeps a Day may unite in Heart and Soul with 'the ſame Spirit of Life in him who keeps not a Day; but he that 'judges the other becauſe of either of theſe, errs from the Spirit, Life 'and Love, and ſo breaks the bond of Unity. And he that draws an-'other to any practice, before the Life in his own particular leads him, 'does as much as in him lies to deſtroy the Soul of that perſon. This 'was the Apoſtles Rule, for every one to perform ſingly to the Lord what 'he did, and not to meddle with the Light or Conſcience of another, '(undervaluing or judging his Brother becauſe his light or practice differs 'from his) but every one to keep cloſe to their own meaſure of Light, 'and proportion of Faith and Knowledge God hath in Mercy beſtowed on them;

them; and here is the true Unity in the Spirit and inward Life, 'and not in outward Uniformity, that was not neceſſary then, neither 'is it now: and the Eye which ſo dotes on it, over-looks the *one thing* '*neceſſary*. Men keeping cloſe to God, he will lead them, and give 'them light faſt enough; for he takes care of ſuch, and knows what 'light and practices are moſt proper for them: but for men to walk 'faſter than the Lord holds forth light, this overturns them, and 'brings up a wrong thing, and the true Birth comes to ſuffer, and to 'be driven back. O how ſweet and pleaſant is it to the ſpiritual 'Eye, to ſee ſeveral ſorts and forms of Chriſtians in Chriſt's School, 'every one learning their own Leſſon, and performing their own pecu-'liar Service, and knowing, owning and loving one another in their 'ſeveral places and different performances to their Maſter, to whom 'they muſt give account, and not quarrel with one another about 'their different practices! For this is the true ground of Love and 'Unity; not that ſuch a Man walks and does juſt as I do, but becauſe 'I feel the ſame Spirit of Life in him, and that he walks in his or-'der and proper way and place of ſubjection to that. This is more 'pleaſing to me than if he walked juſt in the track I walk. Nay, ſo 'far as I am ſpiritual, I cannot ſo much as deſire he ſhould do ſo, till 'he be particularly led thereto by the ſame Spirit that led me. And 'he that knows what it is to receive any Truths, to be led into any 'practice by the Spirit, and how prone the fleſhly part is to make 'haſte, and how dangerous that haſte is, will not be forward to preſs 'his practices on others, but wait patiently until the Lord fit them 'for the receiving thereof; and fear leſt they ſhould receive and 'practiſe too ſoon even in that part that can-'not ſerve the Lord. And this I can truly 'ſay for my ſelf, I never found my Spirit for-'ward to draw any, either to any thing I 'believed to be true, or to any practice or way 'of Worſhip I obſerved or walked in; but deſired the power and 'leadings of Life might go before them, and was afraid leſt Men 'ſhould receive things from my hand, and not from the Lord's. Yea 'when I walked in the way of *Independency* (ſo called) I had more 'unity with, and love towards ſuch as were ſingle-hearted in other 'ways of Worſhip*, (whoſe Spirits I had ſome feeling of in the true 'ſimplicity and life) than with ſuch who were knowing and zealous 'in that way of *Independency*, in whom a wrong thing had got up, 'and cauſed them to ſwerve from the life and ſimplicity.

* This is not according as *S. E.* that *the Quakers are in the Truth, and none but they*; Quakers Challenge, p. 3.

So

'So that the true Church-Government being in the Spirit, and over the Conscience, as in the sight of God, the great care must be to keep it within its bounds, that nothing else govern but the Spirit; and that the Government may be extended only unto that which is to be governed, care must be had that nothing govern, teach, or reprove, cut off or cast out, but the Spirit of Christ. Every Minister is to watch over his own Spirit, that it intrude not into the Work of God, and every one wait in that measure of the Spirit received, to feel the goings forth of the Spirit in him that teacheth and governeth, and so not subject to Man, but to the Lord, not to know any after the flesh, *Paul*, or *Apollo*, or *Peter*, for they may err, but the Spirit cannot; [*But he that receives never so great a measure of the Spirit, if he be not low therein, but lifts up himself because thereof above his Brethren, may easily err himself, and draw aside others into his error.*] The Conscience must be kept tender, that nothing be received but according to its light, and according to its growth and manifestation, so must the Soul stand still, or go on.

'The great error in the Apostacy hath been to set up outward Order and Uniformity, and to make Mens Consciences bend thereto, either by Arguments of Wisdom, or by Force; *but the property of the true Church is to leave the Conscience to its full liberty in the Lord, walking sweetly and harmoniously together in the midst of differing practices; and he that seeth beyond another, yet not disturbs his Brother, but can descend and walk with him according to his measure*: And if his Brother have any heavy burden upon him, can lend him his shoulder and bear part with him.

'If thou beest a Christian indeed, preserve thy Conscience pure and tender towards God, do not defile it with such Religious Practices as thou dost not feel the Spirit leading thee into; for all such are Idolatry, & exceedingly pollute thee. And be tender of thy Brother's Conscience, and be not an Instrument to draw him into any thing which the Lord leads him not into, but rejoice if thou find him in simplicity of heart startle at any thing: for if he here abide faithful, his Guide will in due season appear unto him. For the *Jews* erred; and the *Christians* in name all along the Apostacy for the generality have not been true Christians: but only a persecuted Remnant among them, whose Life hath been nourished and preserved, not by Doctrines and Observations taught by the Precepts of Men, nor gathered Knowledge, but by a little Bread handed to them from the Father of Mercies.

Uniformity

'Uniformity is good, and to be desired, but to strive to bring to a 'Fleshly Uniformity, which ensnares and over-bears the tender Con-'science, is not Good nor Christian. The Apostle, who exhorts to '*be of one Mind*, doth not bid, force one another to one Mind, but bids 'walk together sweetly so far as they had attained, and wherein they 'were otherwise minded, God in his due time would reveal more to 'them. The Intent and Work of the Ministry, is to bring into the 'Unity as Persons are able to follow, and not to force all Men into one 'Practice or Way; that's the way to destroy Faith, and at the best 'can introduce but a Fleshly appearance of Unity, into such a form of 'Godliness as eats out the Power. The way is one, Christ the Truth 'of God, and he that is in the Faith and Obedience to the Light hath 'a taste of the one Way, and knoweth that no variety of Practices '(which is of God) can make a Breach in the true Unity. This is the 'one way for every one to be subject to the Light of Christ's Spirit, 'which he hath received from Christ, and keeping here, there is one 'Heart kept in the midst of all variety and diversity of Practises. Thus far *Isaac Penningston*.

Edward Burrough his Vision, 22*d* of the 8*th* Month, 1661.

'I Saw a great Field or Common, where many Beasts were feeding, 'among which were a great Flock of Sheep; many goodly Sheep, 'and some very weak and scabby, but all fed together, and did not 'hurt one another, nor despise one another. Night was near, and the 'Shepherd came to gather his Flock into a Fold, and stayd by it him-'self, and sent his Dogs, and did make them gather his Flock, and 'they went round the Flock, but some Sheep were feeding about, and 'some fed by the Way, and did not go so fast as the rest, and some of 'the Dogs which were young and not well acquainted with their Ma-'ster's Manner and Custom, did run from the Flock with fierceness 'after the Sheep that stayed behind, and did affrighten them further 'away: for the Sheep did not understand that the Dogs would have 'had them to the rest of the Flock, but were afraid of the Dogs; but 'still the Dogs did pursue these Sheep and bit some: But I saw some

'of

'of the Dogs that were well acquainted with their Masters manner of 'gathering his Flock, did wisely go behind 'the Sheep, and did drive them gently a- 'long without hunting them, or wearying 'of themselves; so when they had gathered the Flock together, the 'Shepherd put them into the Fold, but there were many Goats among 'them which did push with their Horns against the Sheep, and put 'many of them by the Door, but the Shepherd gathered them into the 'Fold, and made fast the Door, and went to seek those Sheep which 'did not come with the Flock: but the Goats were troublesome, 'and hurt the Sheep, but He would not separate them until He had 'the other also: And some of them were lying very Lame, 'for the Dogs had hurt and wearied them, and some were 'feeding under green Hedges; but the Shepherd took the Lame Sheep 'and carryed them on his Back, and drove the other before Him, and 'brought them to the rest of the Flock. But the Sheep that were 'Lame He put in a place alone, and did dress their Wounds, and an- 'nointed their Feet with an Oyl that He had, that did perfectly cure all 'their Diseases; for He spared no Pains, but was willing to hurt Him- 'self rather than them, for his Ointment was mixed with his own 'Blood. And when He had cured them, He put them all together, 'and put the Goats from among them, and then did they rest in per- 'fect Peace, for there was nothing to make them afraid among them, 'but did all feed innocently together, and his Care was over them all 'alike as they had need: and he took their Fleeces as every one had, 'for some had much better than others; but 'those which had the great white soft 'Fleeces, did not despise them which had 'little course ones, for they were both pro- 'fitable to Him: and some of the Sheep had 'almost no Wooll at all on them, and them 'neither did He despise, for the Briars and 'Thorns had pulled it off from them, when the unlearned Dogs did 'drive them from the Fold; *but when Winter came, He took of the 'Wool of the other and put on them, and the other Sheep were not 'at all displeased at it, neither was there any envy in their Hearts. 'And the Shepherd took some of his own Garments, and covered them 'that were very naked, so that they were all preserved from the Cold, 'the Frost had no power over them. But I looked when the Shep- 'herd would have beaten the Dogs, but He did not hurt them, only 'put

*Some such there be now, but called dark Separate Spirits.

**But now instead of taking others Wooll to cover the naked, put other frightful Skins over them, that no Wooll appears, that the rest of the flock may be afraid of them.*

'put them in a String, and led them with Him, for he purposed to 'instruct them better: but some of them would not be led, but were 'very foolish, and did not understand His 'meaning: but them He took home, and 'would have kept them at home, but they 'would not stay, but be always barking a-'broad at the Lambs, to frighten them out 'of their Pastures, and some of the Dogs were 'ready to devour them, for there was something of the nature of the 'Woolf in them. And I greatly *wondred at His care over his Sheep, also 'his Mercy to the unruly Dogs, and He said, This will I do, and much more for 'my Sheep and my Lambs, for I know they have none to help them but my 'Self; and I will not send any more after them, but go my Self*, and carry 'them on my Shoulders, and my Blood will sufficiently heal them, 'and my Garment cover them.

Some that were once sent to fetch in some of the Flock, therefore ever since for near 20 years, of their own accord can lark at the poor Flock, and will not stay at home.

'*Friends, I am constrained to warn you all, that you may forbear judging 'any Man any more upon any pretence whatsoever*, but commit all Judg-'ment to the Son. Wo was upon him who hath taken on him to sit on 'my Seat of Judgment, and hath not judged righteously, for the same 'measure he meteth, shall be met to him again. Whomsoever I find 'on my Seat of Judgment when I come, if he be not, as I am (Holy, 'Just, and Merciful, without any mixture) him will I destroy.

'Let all Unrighteousness be far from you; for whosoever I find in 'Envy, the same Envy shall be his Torment, or Covetous, or Proud, 'or any unclean Mind, that same shall be their Cloathing, and they 'shall stand behind me, having no other Garment but their 'own Filthiness; for whatsoever shall be any ones work here, that 'shall be his Covering when I appear. Therefore all mind your own 'Souls, let nothing but what is like the same Holiness, Righteousness, 'Mercy and Love without respect of Persons, in any wise appear, and 'let Covetousness be far from you, and be as He was in the World, 'that you may be like Him in his Glory; for you cannot be like Him 'in his Glory, further than you are in his Nature of Holiness: There-'fore look into your Hearts, and let no Spark of the old Nature abide 'there; for if there be, it will drive you to look at others, and in that 'time it will gather Strength, and kindle a great Fire in you, which 'is not easily put out, which many know.

'This the Father requireth of you, that his own Spirit in you which 'hath begotten you, may be the Root and moving Cause of all your 'Works and Words, and herein you will receive acceptance with Him,

'and Peace and Righteousness, and everlasting Joy by Him continu-
'ally; and this is the Inheritance into which you were begotten Heirs
'to possess for ever. And not as *G. F.* to *T. G.* signified, *That he was moved to set up Women's Meetings, that all might be in the Power of the Lord.* Christian Quaker, *Part* 1. *p.* 67.

George Bishop against a Paper of Orders (1666) which was subscribed by Eleven of your Ministers, (*viz.*)

G. W. J. W. T. G. T. B. A. P. J. C. R. F. T. L. S. C. J. M. J. P.

'IN the Apostles days were Pastors, Teachers, Elders, *&c.* but in this
'day the Spirit it self is the Pastor, Teacher, Elder, *&c.* So that if the
'Spirit move any to Declare or Speak, that is the Apostle, Teacher, El-
'der, *&c.* So that we have not now things in the disposition of Per-
'sons, nor according to Persons, but in, or according to that power
'which moves in every one, which being kept to, preserves out of
'the Apostacy: So I know no Pastor, Teacher, Elder, *&c.* but as I
'find moving in any, to any of these things, for that is the Elder, the
'Apostle, Teacher, *&c.* and that which would be otherwise than this,
'leads into the Apostacy, and will seek to bring dark night in again,
'and so will place the Thing to the Person, and not the Person to the
'Thing. And for my part, if that day should prevail, or those things
'which Your PAPER seems to hold forth and enforce, I have no o-
'ther Expectation, but that the same exercise we shall receive at your
'hands, as we received at the hands of those who would have held
'us in Captivity in the day that the Lord first visited us.

'The Seed is come, and the Heir in many, who is not to be under
'Tutors and Governours, which must not be limited; to turn unto
'which, or for the good of which the Ministry was sent, and in which
'it is to end, it being the end of the Ministry unto which its Crown is
'to be laid down, as to that which is worthy; and this is no dero-
'gation to the Ministry. Now for You, because You have ministred,
'and the Presence of the Lord hath been with You for the good of
'those that are to be Heirs of Salvation, to think to settle Your selves
'in the place of the Heir, and to enforce Your Orders, as instead, or
'over that; this is not to allow that the Seed is Come, or that it
'is of age to abide in the House for ever. You must not think, that
'because the Lord hath wrought by You, that therefore He will not

'work

'work otherwise. This is the Error into which all have fallen that 'are turned from the Truth. Therefore seek not to undervalue that 'to which you were sent to minister; nor endeavour to keep under 'the Seed, for that will *Break You to Pieces*. The Revelation of God 'is to His Seed, and His Secrets he reveals to it, for which He made the 'World, and for whose sake it is continued; and now the Seed is 'raised to reign over all, which will *Cast You out*, and the Parable of 'the Husband-man will be fulfilled upon You. It is my Love that 'gives me this plainness of Speech; for I am Jealous of every thing 'that may bring dark Night over again, or that may hinder Your 'Work, or lose your Reward with the Lord; for the Son must abide 'in the House for ever, but not the Servant; therefore take heed 'how You set up your Laws and Constitutions over His Dominion, 'or how you take upon You to make Laws to His Dominion, who 'lives for ever. Many have attempted it, and have been *Broken to 'pieces*: and if You do the same, the same will be Your Portion from 'the Hand of the Lord. *G. B.*

These foregoing are not transcribed at large, but abridg'd for Brevity, but the Sence and Substance of the whole is included.

FRIENDS,

THe preceding Papers are such weighty Truths and sound Doctrines, that being kept to, the Enemy had no Opportunity to enter by Divisions, and judging one another; but some of late have acted far contrary, and have endeavoured to promote Government and Orders, even to the compelling others before Convincement; which hath occasion'd much Hurt. Therefore these are commended to you, that you may see how the Antient Testimony was, which reached to the Consciences of many; for indeed who could withstand the force of these Truths? But now your Customes, Forms, and Prescriptions are set up instead thereof, which, like *Jonas*'s Gourd, might for a season be Satisfaction to you; but when taken away, you ought not to be angry thereat.

It is not so material of which Tribe you are of; for *John* saw of 144000 that were sealed, as many of one Tribe as another, and a numberless Number besides. Therefore it is not what Family or People you belong to, as a Body, that will advantage any; but tis

the Seal in the Forehead that shews whose you are. The Saints Seal and the Beasts Mark, are described in Scripture; with the Light every one may see which they bear, and who they belong to. Grapes grow not on Thorns; no outward Form or Practice can give Admittance to the Throne, only the Wedding garment or white Robes; what Opinion or People soever any belong to, advantage not without them.

Therefore away with your calling your Selves *the People of God*, as a Body of People. It is not hereby meant but that God hath of your Tribe some sealed Ones, but not the more for being only of your Tribe. Observe, there was but 12000 of the Tribe of *Judah*, and as many of the Tribe of *Gad*. Therefore let none boast or think themselves the only People of God, and judg all others, but as the Apostle said, esteem others rather better than your selves.

Mind what is afore said by these three Servants of God, for they are such needful things in this day, that they could not be let pass, for it is believed many among you never read them; therefore in Love they are here imparted to you; and who acts or teaches contrary thereto, may be said to bring in another Gospel, and are gone into the Separation and gainsaying Spirit, having a Form of Godliness, but denying the Power thereof, from such turn away. For the Kingdom of Heaven is within, and consists in Righteousness, Joy, and Peace in the Holy Ghost, and not in speaking one sort of Speech or Language, and conforming to Orders and Prescriptions from without.

The Truth is made known, and the Light of Life believed in, and there wants not Professors, but Possessors of the Truth, for the Life thereof is wanting: many consent to the Doctrine of the Light, but few bring forth the Fruits of it, but are content in the knowledg and outward Form, and think they be risen with Christ, when they never were dead to Sin; for not abiding in Judgment, until all that the Wrath or Fire can take hold on be subdued, enter not at the Door; and as Christ said, *All that come not in by Me, are Thieves and Robbers*; for it is not passing by, or starting aside from the Fire that will do, but what can endure the Fire, or Tryal, that is the *pure Gold:* He that hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of His; His Spirit and mind was and is to do his Fathers Will, that was and is his Meat and Drink. Therefore every one try your selves, and be not deceived, calling your selves Children of Light, and yet walk in Darkness. Come down from your High-places, and try your selves, how many of you be come through Christ's Death to his Life. God did appear in and by many of you, and whilst you stood in his

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Counſel, *Iſrael* prevailed, and *Jericho*'s Walls fell; but now the Inhabitants of *Ai* prevail, and *Iſrael* fly; there is ſome accurſed thing in the Camp hid, ſome *Babyloniſh* Garment. Exalting of Men, and affecting to rule over others, are *Babyloniſh*: The Lords of the Gentiles exerciſe and wear them, but Chriſt's Diſciples have no ſuch Garments.

Come before the Lord and fall down every one, as good *Joſhua* did: when there appeared an Angel with a Sword, he asked what he was? who anſwer'd, *as a Captain of the Lord's Hoſt am I come*; and although he ſeemed to take *Joſhua*'s Place, yet was he not angry, but fell down. Hath not God ſaid by ſome of you, He will teach his People himſelf? and now (according as the Scripture and you alſo have declar'd) He is come and known; yet you will not (like good *Joſhua*) fall down or give way, but ſtill hold the People, or limit them by your Orders and Directions. The Light is the Way, which muſt not be by you ſtopped, nor the People driven, but left for the Lord to direct and lead as He pleaſes.

It is fulfilled on many of you, as is ſaid by the Prophet, *He hath made your Wombs barren, and your Breaſts dry*, you neither bring forth, nor nouriſh the heavenly Birth, which is the cauſe many are ſo ſick and weak, and ſo much unrighteouſneſs breaks out amongſt you.

What! always fooliſh Children, ſucking the old Nurſe, and love her better than your own Mother; what! not hear, nor believe any thing, but what Such and Such own, or allow of, and ſuck down all they give! Oh perverſe Children! will your not taſt nor reliſh any Meat of your Father's own preparing? you ſhould have been Teachers (yet ſtill have need to be taught); I mean ſuch Preachers as *Noah* was, whoſe Life and Actions preached Righteouſneſs. Chriſt's Spirit ſpeaks now (as it did ſixteen hundred Years ago) to have our Expectations from God and not Man.

Take no Delight in the greatneſs of your Number, as ſome have done; becauſe the Body grows great, and Number increaſes, therefore ſay they, Truth ſpreads and proſpers; but it is only in Form, not in Power. Remember *David*'s Sin in numbring the People; let not your Content be in ſeeing Multitudes at Meetings, but rather mind their growth in Righteouſneſs, in their Families and Trades, that they may bring Life with them; then will they be a Refreſhment, & not a Burden one to another. If the Lord ſpeak by any, tho an Aſs, ſmite him not; he may ſee when the Prophet cannot. Do not hale and pull out of your Meetings; remember you cry'd againſt it once. Hear with Patience, and anſwer in Meekneſs if thereto call'd, and impoſe nothing

on

en any to practise or believe, but commend to the Witness in the Conscience, and endeavour to bring People to Conformity to Christ, not to your Selves.

O what dividing and judging have been about *comly Orders*, so called! because some cannot for Conscience-sake conform to the Orders and Practices of other Men. Many honest and blameless Friends are condemned and publickly testified against, because they cannot conform to some Orders and Customs of Men. Be not so sollicitous to encrease your Number, as to take in all that will but conform; The Disciples of Christ their Net catch'd good and bad, the bad they turn'd into the Sea; but now, never so good (if not conformable) into the Sea with them, saying *They are gone from Truth, are bad Spirits*, &c. tho never so upright and conscientious.

I fear you take more care for the strict Observations of your own Orders and Traditions, than the Truth in the Heart: for if any use not your Language, or observe not to do just as others in Tithes or other Civil Rites, which the Laws of our Land require, and ought to be observ'd (unless God by his Spirit in the heart do forbid, or any do really for Conscience-sake refuse) but if one cannot do so, must he therefore judg his Brother? that may be required of one, which may not be required of another.

And *J. Crook* saith, 'We read of *Cain* and *Abel*, two Men per-'forming the same Action, attended with the same Formalities, &c. 'and yet the one accepted, the other rejected. In like manner may 'two Persons be found in contrary Actions, Postures and Gestures, 'and yet both accepted of God. For if I should lay a Bond upon my 'self, therein I transgress the Liberty of the Spirit either as to Time, 'Constancy or Place; or if another should lay a Bond upon me, or put 'a Yoke about the neck of the Disciples, this is no more justifiable 'than the former.

Now if God confounded the Builders of *Babel*, for all they were of one Language, and spar'd not his People the Jews, nor the house of *Eli*; what may such expect, who love to bear Rule, and would have all submit to them? And those that do not promote your Orders, altho against their Consciences, must be condemn'd as dark and separate Spirits; I say, what must such expect, who have pretended so much for Liberty of Conscience, but will not allow it to others, that differ only in some Ceremonies from them? The Sons of *Eli* were called wicked Men, they were in haste for a Portion for themselves of the Offering, would have rosted Flesh, and put in their own Hooks, and more minded their own share, than the Service of the Lord, and would

would not ſtay till the Fire of the Lord had conſumed what was to be burnt. A true Figure of ſome now, who will not admit of ſtaying until convinced. But now the Lord hath and will appear (through and by ſome whom you have deſpiſed and caſt out) to gather a People to Himſelf, and not to any Man or Form; and altho you have boaſted of the Number of your Children, yet loſs of Children and Widow-hood is coming on you, and ſhe that hath been accounted Barren ſhall bring forth. *New Jeruſalem* is known where there is no need of your *Sun* nor *MOON*, (for the Lamb is the Light thereof) but the Saints Righteouſneſs, which is the white Robes in which they are comely one to another, not by any outward Orders, but oneneſs in Spirit, altho differing in Opinion or Practice in ſome things.

But for all you that have not ſaid a Confederacy with them, nor been afraid of Man, but anſwer'd the Requirings of God in your own Hearts, and maintained Liberty of Spirit againſt all Impoſitions of Men, notwithſtanding their Reproaches and Scandals by words and Writings, as ye keep faithful to the Lord, and mind his Glory, and the Proſperity of Truth only, fear not; as you keep there, they cannot hurt you: abide in the Patience of the Lamb, and be zealous for nothing but Truth, mind more the Vindication of that, than of your ſelves. As much as may be live in Peace, and avoid Strife and Anger; let your Works ſo ſhine, that your Heavenly Father may have the Glory, and not your ſelves: for if Self come in for any Part, then we cannot ſay all is the Lord's, but ſhall be found guilty, as *Ananias* and *Sapphira* were.

And for thoſe ſo much condemn'd and called *ſeparate dark Spirits*, &c. A Caution to them is, that they walk warily, bearing their Reproaches patiently; and let his Light be your Guide who leads into Fellowſhip with Himſelf, ſo ſhall they be aſhamed who falſly accuſe your good Converſation in Chriſt; into whoſe Liberty, if you be call'd, beware you uſe it not as an Occaſion to the Fleſh, but keep in the Croſs, and in the Self-denial, watching always, leſt under Pretence of Liberty in the Spirit, you take that Liberty it allows not. Reſpect none for Forms, or Names; but only reſpect the Good in all, and be at Variance with nothing but the Spirit of Wickedneſs, and its Offspring.

Gather not People to your ſelves, but turn them to the Spirit of Chriſt in their own Hearts, to be governed thereby in all Performances; and like the poor Publican (if you ſee your ſelves to have need of Mercy) be not aſhamed with him to confeſs, altho the proud Phariſee may reproach

reproach you therefore; for of the two, the Publican was rather justified. The Blessings belong to the Poor and Hungry. And as the Apostle saith, *I beseech you Brethren, mark them which cause Divisions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine which you have received, and avoid them.* * *For they that are such, serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, &c. and by their good Words, and fair Speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.* I would have you wise to that which is good, but simple concerning evil; and keep your selves from Idols.

* Such are those who condemn their Brethren, for dark and separate Spirits, because they conform not to *G. F.*'s Orders and Prescriptions before Convincement.

In the Love of the Power, and Virtue of Truth, (but not of the empty Form) I bid you farewel.

T. C.

The same Sins that are outwardly so common amongst the Prophane, are spiritually or mystically among the Professors, even of the Truth; the sense of which hath caused deep Sorrow upon some.

Wherefore doest thou look upon the Transgressors, and holdest thy Tongue, when the wicked devoureth the Man more righteous than he?

Thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts, saying, Execute true Judgment, and shew Mercy and Compassion every Man to his Brother. And oppress not the Widow, nor the Fatherless, the Stranger, nor the Poor, and let none of you imagine Evil against his Brother in your Heart.

Wo to him that saith, I am, and there is none besides me; behold, he that lifteth up himself, his Mind is not upright in him: but the Just shall live by Faith.

POSTCRIPT.

This is not Published to encrease Differences among Brethren, but for encouragement to them, who like good *Simion*, have waited for the Consolation of *Israel*, and can with him be content when that appears, to depart in Peace.

But some may say touching me, *Thou art one of the Troublers of Israel*, to which I Answer, No: But it is You and your Father's House, who having departed from the Primitive Testimony (which was to turn all to the Power of God, by it to be guided) now urge Conformity to outward Orders, &c. which hath occasion'd great Divisions & Burdens to the hinderance of the growth and Prosperity of Righteousness.

The E N D.